

steeds. At last all the horses are knocked up, and now there are half-a-dozen donkeys. What a change! Behold the hero in the amphitheatre, the spangled jacket thrown on one side, the cork slippers on the other. Puffing, panting, and perspiring, he pokes one sullen brute, thwacks another, cuffs a third, and curses a fourth, while one brays to the audience, and another rolls in the sawdust. Behold the late Prime Minister and the Reform Ministry — the spirited and snow-white steeds have gradually changed into an equal number of sullen and obstinate donkeys; while Mr. Merryman, who, like the Lord Chancellor, was once the very life of the ring, now lies his despairing length in the middle of the stage, with his jokes exhausted and his bottle empty!

One can imagine how this kind of thing was relished by his audience. 'I stand astonishingly well at Wycombe,' he wrote to Austen, 'and may beat the Colonel yet. Had I the money, I might canter over the county, for my popularity is irresistible.' On the day following the speech at Wycombe he spoke again at Aylesbury at an agricultural dinner where he was introduced to the audience as a firm friend of the agricultural interest, and where he declared that his confidence in the present Administration was greatly abated by the exclusion of Lord Chandos from office. The Duke of Buckingham was in the chair, so this declaration was not only good politics for the audience, but a courtly compliment which, however touched with irony, was in the style Disraeli loved. His presence at such a gathering marked a distinct advance towards identification with the Tories; and in sending the reprint of the Wycombe speech to Durham, whom he had described in it as the only man of any decision of character in the Reform Ministry, he shows a consciousness of the widening of the interval between them.

As for the opinions contained in these pages [he writes] they are those I have ever professed, and I should grieve if your Lordship's juncture with the Whigs and [my ?] continued resistance to a party which has ever opposed me, even with a degree of personal malignity, should ever place me in opposition